

7 STEPS TO WRITING BUSINESS USE CASES



1 IDENTIFY THE ACTORS

Actor: Someone or something that interacts with, or uses, the system to achieve a desired goal

An actor may be:

- A user of the system. Describe the user by their role
- An individual who is not an user (customer, client, etc)
- The System under Discussion (SuD). Describe it as “the system
- Another system (external entity)

2 IDENTIFY THE GOAL

Goal: The aim, or purpose – Goals summarize system functionality in terms of use from a business perspective

Identify the Goal:

- From the high-level scenario
- By brainstorming
- By asking “What does this Actor want to do?”

3 DEFINE THE PRE-CONDITIONS

Pre-Condition: Something that must happen before the Use Case can start; something that must be in place before the Use Case can start

Identify Pre-Conditions by asking:

- “What must be in place for the Use Case to begin?”
- “How do you know you need to do this?”

4 DEFINE THE POST-CONDITIONS

Post-Conditions: The result, or successful outcome of the Use Case

Identify the Post-Conditions by asking:

- “What is the successful result of this process or Use Case?”

5 DESCRIBE THE MAIN FLOW

Main Flow:

- Also known as Primary Scenario
- A single thread of events
- The simplest sequence – everything goes right
- Ideally, no branching – make a note of relevant variations
- Starts with pre-conditions and ends with post conditions

Describe the Main Flow by asking:

- “What must happen to achieve the goal / outcome?”
- “What does the actor need to do next?”
- “What might happen next?”
- “What do you need to do to get from the trigger to the outcome?”

6 DESCRIBE THE EXCEPTIONS

Exceptions:

- Created to describe the failure situations Things that may go wrong in the Use Case

Discover exceptions by asking:

- “What could go wrong?”

7 DESCRIBE THE ALTERNATE FLOWS

Alternate Flows:

- Created to describe the variations to the Main Flow Results in successful outcome Also referred to as scenarios Listen for “sometimes”, “maybe”, and “it depends”

Discover alternate flows by asking:

- “What might affect this Use Case?”

